



Devon Delaney Should Totally Know Better (mix)

By Lauren Barnholdt

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To show how totally unaffected she is by Bailey's obvious Luke hang-up, Devon invents a fake ex-boyfriend of her own: Greg. Fab! What could go wrong? But it isn't long before Devon finds herself in the middle of another supergigantic lie. Can Devon come clean in time to keep the guy? Or will she lose everything due to another lie?

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Editorial Review

About the Author

Lauren Barnholdt is the author of the teen novels *The Thing About the Truth*, *Sometimes It Happens*, *One Night That Changes Everything*, *Two-way Street*, *Right of Way*, and *Watch Me*. She is also the author of the middle grade novels *The Secret Identity of Devon Delaney*, *Devon Delaney Should Totally Know Better*, *Four Truths and a Lie*, *Rules for Secret-Keeping*, *Fake Me a Match*, and the Girl Meets Ghost series. She lives in Waltham, Massachusetts. Visit her at LaurenBarnholdt.com.

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DEVON DELANEY SHOULD TOTALLY KNOW BETTER

chapter one

I think I have figured out the bane of my existence. The bane of one's existence, in case you don't already know, is the thing that is driving you the craziest. The thing that makes you absolutely totally nuts, the thing that if it did not exist, you could just relax and have a perfect life.

But the bane of my existence is not a thing. The bane of my existence is a person. And that person is Bailey Barelli.

Take right now, for example. Bailey Barelli is sitting one row over and three seats ahead of me in English. Which is fine. What is not fine, is that sitting in my row, and three seats up, is my boyfriend, Luke. Which means that Luke is sitting *right next to* Bailey Barelli.

Which would not be so bad, except two minutes ago, I saw her pass a note to Luke. Then I saw Luke open it, give Bailey a smile, and then write something on her note and *pass it back to her*. This is very unacceptable behavior, in my opinion. Plus, the bell has just rung. Which means all this unacceptable note passing started as soon as the bell rang, like she couldn't even wait one second. What was so important that she had to tell Luke, anyway? They're not even friends.

"Please everyone put your desks in a circle," our teacher, Mrs. Bancock, says. She grabs her grade book off her desk and walks to the front of the room. "We're going to get started."

I stand up and push my desk into the circle, right between Cassie Schafter and Michael Ronson. We're reading *Romeo and Juliet*, and Mrs. Bancock thinks we'll "absorb more Shakespeare" if we act out the parts. So every day, we put our desks in a circle, and spend the period reenacting *Romeo and Juliet*. Well, not actually reenacting. We just read out loud from our desks.

"Now," Mrs. Bancock says. She pushes her glasses up on her nose, and settles into a student desk at the head of the circle, her long skirt billowing around her. "Today is my favorite day of *Romeo and Juliet*, because we are going to be reading the balcony scene. And," she goes on, "as a special treat, this time we will be acting out the action!"

A nervous laugh goes through the class. The balcony scene. That's the most famous scene of the play—where Romeo and Juliet declare their love for each other, and Romeo climbs up the balcony and I think he might even kiss Juliet. That could actually be kind of fun, since Romeo is played by Gabriel Warren, this slightly annoying guy in our class who has a Mohawk.

"I'm ready whenever you are," Bailey Barelli says, and flips her long, dark hair over one shoulder. Bailey Barelli is, of course, Juliet. This is because when Mrs. Bancock called for volunteers, Bailey Barelli shouted out, "I'LL DO IT!" really loud and raised her hand and was practically jumping out of her seat. You'd think teachers would be smart enough to realize that this kind of behavior is annoying and that whoever's doing it is obviously just sucking up, but they totally don't, since Mrs. Bancock just smiled and said, "Your enthusiasm is refreshing, Bailey. Let's put you down for the part of Juliet." Sigh.

I open my book to the balcony scene, and catch Luke's eye across the room, where he's sitting on the other side of the circle. He shoots me a smile, and I smile back before returning my eyes to my book. I'm still not exactly sure how I'm supposed to act around him. I mean, yeah, he is my boyfriend, but he's only been my boyfriend for two weeks.

And he's my first boyfriend. So it's not like I can say, *Oh, right, when my last boyfriend and I were going out for two weeks, this is how it was.*

"Oh, except," Bailey Barelli says, "Gabriel's not here." She reaches into her bag, pulls out a lip gloss, and smears some on her lips.

"Oh," Mrs. Bancock says. She looks around the room. "Well, I guess we'll need a replacement Romeo for the day." She peers over the top of her glasses. "Now, who would like to play Romeo? Of course you'll receive extra credit."

To my horror, I see Luke raise his hand on the other side of the room. What? Why? Is Luke crazy? Has he lost his mind? Does he not understand that when you have a girlfriend, you do not decide to be the Romeo to someone else's Juliet? I do my best to send him a look that says, *Why are you doing that, please put your hand down immediately.* But he doesn't seem to understand. I close my eyes and open them again, sure I have imagined this. But no. There he is, calmly sitting there with his hand in the air, like it's totally normal.

And then I think about how Bailey was just smearing that lip gloss all over her lips. So I do the only thing I can be expected to do in a situation like this. I pull a Bailey Barelli. "I'll do it!" I say, waving my hand around. "I'll play Romeo!"

Mrs. Bancock looks at me, surprised. I don't usually volunteer for things with such, uh, enthusiasm. And definitely not for something like playing Romeo. "Devon Delaney," she says. "*You* want to play Romeo?"

"Oh, yes, please," I tell her, nodding my head up and down furiously. "I really need the extra credit." This isn't really true. I mean, of course I could *use* the extra credit, but I'm not in trouble with the class or anything.

"Well," she says, "I don't see any reason why we have to be sexist! You shouldn't be discounted from getting the part just because you're a woman." And that's how I end up down on one knee, spending first period reenacting the balcony scene from Romeo and Juliet with Bailey Barelli.

Whatever. Luke probably just needed the extra credit. He's very smart, and always trying to do extra work.

It's one of the things I love about him. And passing notes is so not a big deal. I pass notes with people all the time. Besides, I'm a confident, mature woman. I'm not threatened just because Luke got passed a note by some other girl. I mean, he's waiting for *me* after class, not Bailey. He's going to be walking *me* to science class, not Bailey. He likes *me*, not Bailey. In fact, I'm sure he's going to tell me all about it. Including all the pertinent details, like why the note was passed, what was in it, why he wrote her back, etc. And then maybe he'll even talk about how annoying she is.

"Good job," Luke says as we walk.

"At what?" I ask. I'm weaving through the crowd of kids in the science wing, and it's taking all my strength not to trip in the new shoes I'm wearing. I got them at the consignment shop with my BFF, Lexi—totally cute, and black with a little heel. They're half a size too small, but they were five dollars! Pain is totally worth it for five dollars.

"At playing Romeo." Luke reaches through the throng of kids and takes my hand, and a rush of heat slides up my arm. I'm still not used to holding hands in public like this. Although I guess it's not really public. It's school. But still. People can see. Anyone could just be walking down the hall and go, "Oh, look, there's Devon holding hands with Luke."

"I never thought I'd be able to imagine you as a guy, but you really pulled it off." He shoots me a grin.

"Thanks," I say, a little uncertainly this time. What does he mean, he never saw me as a guy before? I mean, I'm flattered that he thinks I'm a good actress. (Actor?) But does Luke think of me as masculine now? That would be rather unfortunate, since I totally wore my cutest outfit today (black and gray dress over black ribbed tights, and the aforementioned new shoes).

"Well, here we are," I say, stopping outside of my science class. "Thanks for walking me to class." I give him an expectant look, waiting for him to mention the fact that he and Bailey were passing notes at the beginning of the period. Well, one note. That I saw.

"Yup, here we are," he says. He shifts his book bag from one shoulder to the other.

"Almost time for you to get to math," I remind him, in case he's forgotten that we're on a time schedule here.

"Yup," he agrees. "Almost time."

I practice putting an "I'm your girlfriend and you can tell me anything" kind of look on my face.

"Oh!" Luke says, "I almost forgot!"

Aha! I knew he would never keep anything from me. Luke and I have a very honest relationship, one built on mutual trust and—

"I have to stay after tonight, for mock trial. But I'll give you a call later, when I get home." And then he squeezes my hand and takes off down the hall. Sigh. So much for honesty.

When I get into science, I slide into my seat next to my other BFF, Mel. She's looking at something in her binder, but quickly closes it when she sees me. "What are you looking at?" I ask.

“Nothing,” she says quickly, but a guilty look passes over her face. “Just trying to get a head start on the reading.”

“What reading?” I ask, feeling slightly panicked. “There was reading?”

“No, no,” she says. “I just mean for next week.” She takes her science book off the bottom of her pile of books and places it on top of her binder. “What’s up?”

“Nothing,” I sigh. “Except that I’m having a crisis.”

“What sort?” Mel asks, her brown eyes serious.

“A boyfriend crisis,” I announce. I lean in close so that no one will overhear. Some of Luke’s friends from soccer sit at the lab table behind us, and the last thing I need is them reporting back to Luke about my obvious insecurity. “Luke was passing notes with Bailey Barelli during English, and to stop it, I had to play Romeo to her Juliet.” I pause and wait for Mel to exclaim how horrible that is.

But all she says is, “What kind of notes?”

“I dunno,” I say. “That’s the point. He didn’t tell me what it said.”

“Wait, notes or note?” Mel asks.

“Note,” I say. “Well, that I saw anyway.” I think about it. “Is there any way they could have been discussing class work over more than one note?” You’d think one note would be enough. One note I’m willing to forgive. Two notes, now that’s a little more serious.

“Devon,” Mel says, in a tone that makes me think I’m not going to really like what she has to say. “Maybe you should just trust Luke. It could have been anything in those notes.” I look at her skeptically. “And,” she rushes on. “If you’re worried about it, maybe you should just ask him.” There’s a pause, and then Mel says, “Remember how being honest and straightforward is the best policy?”

I shift uncomfortably in my seat. I know she’s thinking about a little, uh, *situation* I had a few weeks ago. See, this summer I stayed with my grandma while my parents were sorting out some problems in their marriage, and while I was there, I met this girl named Lexi Cortland. I kind of sort of accidentally might have told Lexi that at my school back home, I was totally popular and dating Jared Bentley, the most popular guy at Robert Hawk Junior High. Which wasn’t true, but I figured it was summer, I was just having fun, and I’d never see Lexi again.

Except then Lexi transferred to my school last month, and I had to spend a lot of time and energy scrambling around trying to fix everything. It all became super complicated, because I was trying to pretend Jared was my boyfriend, even though he wasn’t, and then I started liking Luke, and Jared starting liking Lexi. And to make matters worse, Luke and Jared are best friends. It was all a very tangled mess.

“But that all turned out fine,” I remind Mel, waving my hand like it was no big deal. And it did. Lexi and I are now BFF, she’s going out with Jared, and Luke and I are together. And yes, there were some, um, challenges to be worked out, but everything’s fine now. Better than fine, in fact.

“Hellllllo,” Lexi trills, walking into the classroom and sliding down on the other side of the table. “How are

my girls this lovely morning?”

Lexi’s a morning person, probably because she gets a cappuccino every morning on her way to school. Lexi doesn’t ride the bus. Her mom drives her in, and they stop at Starbucks.

“Not so well,” I say. “I just had to play Romeo to Bailey Barelli’s Juliet.”

“Ugh, *Barelli*,” Lexi says, wrinkling up her small nose to show her distaste. “I’m so not a fan.”

“Thank you!” I say, throwing my hands up in the air. I give Mel a “see? she is pretty bad and I’m not overreacting” kind of look.

“Well, I have news, too,” Lexi says. She folds her hands on the table and waits. I notice that her nails are painted light blue with little silvery star stickers on them. Very cute. Mel and I look at her expectantly.

“Aren’t you going to ask me what it is?”

“What is it?” Mel asks.

“Jared asked me to the dance.” We all squeal, even though since Jared is Lexi’s boyfriend, it’s kind of a given that he would ask her to the dance. But still. It’s a semiformal, which is kind of a big deal.

“Has Luke asked you yet?” Lexi asks. “We all have to go together.”

“No,” I say, grabbing the frayed corner of my science notebook and scratching it with my fingernail.

“And even if he does, the real problem is going to be getting my mom to allow me to go with him.”

“Well, you better start working on her now,” Lexi says wisely.

Hmmm. Good point. Maybe I can offer to do some more chores around the house? And then she’ll be all, “Devon, you have been so amazing lately, of course you can go to the dance.”

“Yeah,” Mel says. “Your mom’s the type that’s going to need a *lot* of work. More than just doing chores around the house or something.”

Great.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

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